

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4606

July 17, 2020

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary of Treasury
U.S. Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin,

Thank you for appearing before the House Small Business Committee today. In our exchange during the hearing, I was encouraged by your responses to my questions about Iowans' experiences with the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Impact Payment program. However, to ensure the same mistakes are not repeated as Congress looks toward appropriating additional recovery aid, I wanted to follow up and offer my assistance moving forward.

As I described in the hearing, our office has heard from over 700 Iowans with issues concerning their economic impact payment. The Treasury Department's abrupt move to start issuing outstanding direct assistance payments as prepaid debit cards—instead of checks—to those without direct deposit information only heightened the confusion. After being warned about their own vulnerability to fraud and stimulus check scams, constituents were unsure of the security of these cards and their activation process. Since they were expecting a check, some do not know if they ever received the card or accidentally threw the card away thinking that they were spam or fraud, since the cards can easily be confused with unsolicited credit card mail offers.

Similarly, the piecemeal implementation of the Paycheck Protection Program created confusion and frustration, causing many of our small business owners to slip through the cracks. As you confirmed at today's hearing, the lack of focus on rural business owners and those who bank with small financial institutions was a part of the problem.

These are examples of how the lack of clear communication and guidance from the Department of Treasury hurt taxpayers in places like Iowa. Looking ahead, I hope that we can partner to make sure that future recovery assistance reaches Iowa families and business owners. They simply cannot afford another clumsy rollout like we have experienced over the last few months and I want to work with you to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these taxpayer-funded programs.

Additionally, I look forward to your help with the outstanding issues that our constituents are experiencing with their economic impact payments. Top priorities for our office are making sure that every Iowan who is owed a direct payment receives one and making sure that no one is forced to pay unnecessary charges or fees in the process. Over the last few months, our staff has been in regular communication with the Department of the Treasury about Iowans' cases and we will continue to follow up on those requests for assistance.

Again, thank you for appearing before the Committee today. If you have any questions, please send an email to Abby.Finkenauer01@mail.house.gov. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to support Iowa through this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Abby', followed by a stylized flourish or underline.

Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress